

10-30-00

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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No. 09792909-4658

First Named Inventor or Application Identifier

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Express Mail Label No: EL654782412US

ADDRESS TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box Patent Application
Washington, DC 20231

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

1. ☒ Specification Total Pages 32
2. ☒ Drawing(s) (35USC 113) Total Pages 9
3. ☒ Declaration and Power of Attorney Total Pages 4
 - a. ☒ Unexecuted(original or copy)
 - b. ☐ Copy from prior application (37CFR 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 14 completed)
 - i. ☐ [Note Box 4 Below]
DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
Signed statement attached deleting Inventor(s) named in the prior application, see 37 CFR 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
4. ☐ Incorporation By Reference (usable if Box 3b is checked)
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 3b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

5. ☐ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & documentation)
6. ☒ Letter under 37 CFR 1.41(c).
7. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
8. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
9. ☒ Preliminary Amendment
10. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
(Should be specifically itemized)
11. ☐ Small Entity ☐ Statement filed in prior Application, Status still proper and desired
12. ☒ Certified copy of Japanese priority application No. P11-306245 filed October 28, 1999

14. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) ☐ of prior application No:

CLAIMS AS FILED

	(1) FOR	(2) NUMBER FILED	(3) NUMBER EXTRA	(4) RATE	(5) BASIC FEE \$710.00
TOTAL CLAIMS	20	45	25	18.00	450.00
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS	03	4	1	80.00	80.00
		ANY MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIMS? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO			0.00
				TOTAL FEE	\$1,240.00

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Applicant(s): Jiro Yamada, et al.

Attorney Docket No. 09792909-4658

\$1,240.00 Filing Fee (45 claims-4 independent)

Drawings (9 sheets - Figs. 1-9)

Unexecuted Declaration

Letter Under Rule 37

Preliminary Amendment

Certified copies of Japanese priority application No. P11-306245

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DISPLAY APPARATUS AND
METHOD FOR FABRICATING THE SAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a display
apparatus which comprises organic electro-luminescence
devices individually having an organic light emitting
10 layer, and a method for fabricating such display
apparatus.

2. Description of the Related Art

An organic electro-luminescence (abbreviated as EL
15 hereinafter) device based on electro-luminescence of
organic materials has an organic layer comprising an
organic hole transport layer and an organic light
emitting layer laminated between a lower electrode and an
upper electrode, and is attracting a good deal of
20 attention as a light emitting device capable of high-
luminance light emission by low-voltage direct current
drive.

Since such an organic EL device can respond as fast
as within 1 μ sec or below, an organic EL display
25 apparatus using such devices can be driven by simple-
matrix duty operation. A problem will, however, arise in
that there is a growing need for instantaneously applying
a large current to the organic EL devices to ensure
sufficient luminous intensity in the future situation in
30 which the EL display apparatus will be operated at a
higher duty responding to an increasing trend in the

number of pixels, which is likely to damage the devices.

On the other hand in active-matrix operation, operation current can constantly be applied to the organic EL devices during a period of one frame according to signal voltage, since the signal voltage can be retained by a retention capacitor provided to the individual pixels together with a thin film transistor (abbreviated as TFT hereinafter). Thus, unlikely to a case with the single matrix operation, there is no need to instantaneously apply a large current so that the damages to the organic EL devices can be reduced.

In the active-matrix display apparatus using such organic EL devices (that is, the organic EL display), each pixel on a substrate is individually provided with a TFT, the TFTs are covered with an interlayer insulating film, and further thereon organic EL devices are formed. Each organic EL device comprises a lower electrode patterned for the individual pixels so as to be connected to the TFT, an organic layer formed so as to cover the lower electrode, and an upper electrode provided so as to cover the organic layer.

In such an active-matrix display apparatus, the upper electrode is formed as a so-called blanket film covering all pixels, and used as an upper common electrode for such all pixels. In the display apparatus capable of color display, the organic layers are separately patterned for each color on the lower electrode.

Such display apparatus having organic EL devices on the insulating film covering the TFTs on the substrate is, however, disadvantageous in that such TFTs are causative

of narrowing the aperture of the organic EL devices when the display apparatus is designed as of transmission type in which light emitted from the organic layer is observed from the substrate side.

5 Thus for the active-matrix display apparatus, it is supposed to be advantageous to adopt a so-called upper light withdrawing structure (hereinafter referred to as top emission type) in which the light is withdrawn from an opposite side of the substrate so as to ensure a
10 sufficient aperture of the organic EL devices.

 Constituting the active-matrix display apparatus as the top emission type requires the lower electrode to be made of a light reflective material and the upper common electrode to be made of a transparent material. Indium
15 tin oxide (ITO) and indium zinc oxide (IXO), known as materials for transparent conductive film, are however higher in resistivity than metals, so that the upper common electrode is likely to cause voltage drop due to internal voltage gradient occurs therein. This may cause
20 significant degradation of the display properties since the voltage applied to the individual organic EL devices on the display plane becomes non-uniform, and since the luminous intensity in the center portion of the display plane decreases.

25 While the transparent conductive film such as ITO or IXO can be formed by evaporation or sputtering, the former method is difficult to yield a film of good quality, and the obtained film tends to have high resistivity and low light transmissivity. The sputtering
30 is thus adopted in the fabrication process of the display apparatus to form the transparent conductive film. The

sputtering is, however, higher in energy of particles to be deposited as compared with vapor deposition, so that the underlying surface on which the deposition proceeds is more likely to be damaged. Since the basic structure of the organic EL device resembles to that of a light emitting diode made of inorganic semiconductor materials, such damages exerted on the underlying organic layer will be causative of leak current, which may further result in the production of non-emissive pixels called "dead pixels".

To avoid the production of such dead pixels, it is proposed to form the upper common electrode with a metal film thin enough so as to allow sufficient light transmissivity. Such metal film may, however, inevitably has a high sheet resistance as a result of the thinning and will also produce voltage gradient in the upper common electrode similarly to the case with the transparent conductive film, which will cause voltage drop and thus will significantly lower the display properties.

The thinning of the upper common electrode raises another problem in that the electrode cannot fully prevent the atmospheric moisture or oxygen from intruding into the organic layer, which will accelerate deterioration of the organic layer.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide an active-matrix-type display apparatus ensuring sufficient luminous intensity of the organic EL devices and allowing improved display properties.

To accomplish the foregoing object, a first aspect of the present invention relates to a display apparatus having a plurality of pixels, which comprises:

a first electrode formed on a substrate;

5 a light emitting layer formed on the first electrode; and

a second electrode formed on the light emitting layer, wherein:

the plurality of pixels are partitioned by a rib
10 larger in thickness than the light emitting layer and having at least a conductive material; and the conductive material layer is electrically connected to the second electrode.

Since the rib having the conductive material serves
15 as an auxiliary wiring for the second electrode, the pressure drop of the second electrode can successfully be suppressed and thus sufficient luminous intensity of the organic light emitting layer of the individual pixels can be retained even when the second electrode is made of a
20 high-resistivity material. Moreover, the rib also serves as a spacer for a mask used for patterning the organic layer, so that there is no need to separately provide the spacer and the auxiliary wiring between every adjacent pixels. This allows space saving between every adjacent
25 pixels and reserve of the pixel area.

According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a display apparatus having a plurality of pixels, which comprises:

a field effective transistor formed on a substrate
30 and having a first electrode, a second electrode and a third electrode;

an interlayer insulating film formed on the field effective transistor;

a lower electrode connected to the first electrode through an opening formed on the interlayer insulating film;

an organic layer formed on the lower electrode and having a light emitting layer; and

an upper electrode formed on the organic layer, wherein:

the plurality of pixels are partitioned by a rib larger in thickness than the organic layer and having at least a conductive material; and the conductive material layer is electrically connected to the upper electrode.

According to the display apparatus according to the second aspect of the present invention, sufficient luminous intensity of the organic light emitting layer of all pixels on the display plane can be retained while achieving the space saving between every adjacent pixels to reserve sufficient pixel area by providing between every adjacent pixels the rib which serves as the spacers for the mask used for patterning the organic layer and also as the auxiliary electrode for the upper electrode covering the entire plane of the display plane. This results in improvement in the display properties of an active-matrix-type display apparatus.

According to a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for fabricating a display apparatus having a plurality of pixels, which comprises:

a step for forming on a substrate a first electrode;

a step for forming between adjacent ones of the plurality of pixels a rib having a conductive material;

a step for placing a mask on the rib, and forming on the first electrode a light emitting layer smaller in thickness than the rib; and

a step for forming a second electrode on the light emitting layer and on the rib.

According to a fourth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for fabricating a display apparatus having a plurality of pixels, which comprises:

a step for forming on a substrate a field effective transistor having a first electrode, a second electrode and a third electrode;

a step for forming on the field effective transistor an interlayer insulating film;

a step for forming an opening to the interlayer insulating film;

a step for forming on the interlayer insulating film a lower electrode connected through the opening to the first electrode;

a step for forming between adjacent ones of a plurality of the pixels a rib having a conductive material;

a step for placing a mask on the rib, and forming on the lower electrode an organic layer having a light emitting layer smaller in thickness than the rib; and

a step for forming on the organic layer an upper electrode and a protective layer made of an insulating material or a conductive material while keeping the organic layer unexposed to the air.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The above and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent from the following description of the presently preferred exemplary embodiments of the invention taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a sectional view of an essential part of a display apparatus according to an embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a plan view of an essential part of a display apparatus for explaining the embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 3A to 3C are sectional views for explaining a fabrication process of the display apparatus shown in Figs. 1 and 2;

Fig. 4 is a sectional view for explaining the fabrication process as continued from Fig. 3C;

Figs. 5A to 5C are sectional views for explaining the fabrication process as continued from Fig. 4;

Fig. 6 is a sectional view for explaining the fabrication process as continued from Fig. 5C;

Fig. 7 is a sectional view for explaining the fabrication process as continued from Fig. 6;

Fig. 8 is a sectional view of an exemplary constitution of a rib; and

Fig. 9 is a plan view of an essential part of another display apparatus according to another embodiment of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The present invention will be detailed referring to the attached drawings.

Fig. 1 is a schematic sectional view showing a display area of a display apparatus according to an example of the present invention. Fig. 2 is a schematic plan view showing the display area of the display apparatus shown in Fig. 1. Fig. 1 is a view in section along the line I-I in Fig. 2. Among various structural components which will be explained hereinafter in order from those closer to the lower layer side, Fig. 1 now shows only organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B, an upper common electrode 12 and ribs 14. The organic EL display apparatus shown in these figures is an active-matrix-type color display apparatus, the constitution of which will be explained with reference also to additional drawings of Figs. 3A, 3B, 3C, 4, 5A, 5B, 5C, 6 and 7 following the fabrication procedures thereof.

First as shown in Fig. 3A, a thin-film transistor 2 is fabricated for every pixel "a" on a substrate 1. A gate electrode 3 of the thin-film transistor 2 is connected to a scan circuit not shown. While the thin-film transistor 2 in this figure is expressed as a bottom-gate-type, a thin-film transistor of a top-gate-type is also allowable. For a case that the display device is of top emission type in which emitted light is observed from the opposite side of the substrate 1, the substrate 1 needs not be limited to those made of transparent materials. Whereas for a case that the display device is of transmission type in which emitted light is observed from the substrate 1 side, the substrate 1 needs be made of a transparent material.

Next, on the substrate 1, a first interlayer insulating film 4 made of silicon oxide or a silicon oxide-base material such as PSG (phospho-silicate glass), that is phosphorus-containing silicon oxide, is formed so as to cover the thin-film transistor 2. The first interlayer insulating film 4 is then processed to form via holes (not shown) thereon, a wiring 6 is then patterned on the first interlayer insulating film 4 so as to make contact with a source/drain region of the thin-film transistor 2 through the via hole. The wiring 6 is used for a signal line and is made, for example, of aluminum or aluminum-copper alloy.

Next, as shown in Fig. 3B, a second interlayer insulating film 7 is formed on the first interlayer insulating film 4 so as to cover the wiring 6, and the second interlayer insulating film 7 is then processed to form via holes 8 thereon, the bottom of which reaches the wiring 6. The second interlayer insulating film 7 is preferably made of a material film which can readily be planarized such as polyimide film since the film covers the patterned wiring 6. The second interlayer insulating film 7 is also preferably made of a material film with a small coefficient of water absorption since the second interlayer insulating film 7 is expected to prevent moisture-related deterioration of an organic layer formed later and thereby to retain desirable luminous intensity.

Thereafter as shown in Fig. 1, organic EL devices 9 are formed on the second interlayer insulating film 7 so as to be aligned to the individual pixels "a". Each of the EL devices 9 comprises a lower electrode 10, organic layers 11R, 11G or 11B, and an upper common electrode 12

stacked in this order.

More specifically, first as shown in Fig. 3C, the lower electrode 10 patterned for every pixel "a" is formed on the second interlayer insulating film 7 so as to make contact with the wiring 6 through the via hole 8 formed to the second interlayer insulating film 7. The lower electrode 10 is used as an anode electrode or a cathode electrode, which is made of a highly reflective material when the display apparatus is designed as a top emission type, whereas made of a transparent material for the display apparatus of transmission type.

The exemplary display apparatus shown here is a top emission type, in which the lower electrode 10 is used as an anode electrode. The lower electrode 10 is made of a conductive material having a large work function and a large reflectivity of light, such as chromium (Cr), iron (Fe), cobalt (Co), nickel (Ni), copper (Cu), tantalum (Ta), tungsten (W), platinum (Pt) or gold (Au).

For a case that the display apparatus is of the top emission type and the lower electrode 10 is used as a cathode electrode, the lower electrode 10 is made of a conductive material having a small work function but a large reflectivity of light, such as aluminum (Al), indium (In), magnesium (Mg)-silver (Ag) alloy, lithium (Li)-fluorine (F) compound or lithium-oxygen (O) compound.

For a case that the display apparatus is of a transmission type and the lower electrode 10 is used as an anode electrode, the lower electrode 10 is made of a conductive material having a large work function and a large transmissivity of light such as ITO or IXO. For a case that the display apparatus is of the transmission

type and the lower electrode 10 is used as a cathode electrode, the lower electrode 10 is made of a conductive material having a small work function and a large transmissivity of light.

5 Next, as shown in Fig. 4, an insulating film 13 is formed on the second interlayer insulating film 7 so as to cover the periphery of the lower electrode 10. Thereby the lower electrode 10 is exposed in a window opened to the insulating film 13. The insulating film 13
10 is made, for example, of silicon oxide.

 Next on the insulating film 13, a rib 14, which is a unique component in the present invention, is formed. The rib 14 is composed of an insulating material layer 14a and a conductive material layer 14b stacked thereon,
15 and is formed in a lattice pattern so as to partition the individual pixels "a" over the entire display area (see Fig. 2), and the upper conductive material layer 14b is used as an auxiliary wiring which will be connected to the upper common electrode 12 (see Fig. 1) patterned
20 later. The insulating material layer 14a now can be made of an organic insulating material such as polyimide or photoresist, or an inorganic insulating material such as silicon oxide. The conductive material layer 14b can be made of a low-resistivity conductive material such as
25 aluminum (Al) or chromium (Cr), which may be used individually or in combination.

 The rib 14 is formed so that the top surface of which is higher in the level than those of the organic layers 11R, 11G and 11B (see Fig. 1). Such designing of
30 the rib 14 allows it to serve as a spacer for a mask used when evaporating the organic layers 11R, 11G and 11B on

the lower electrode 10 as described in the next process.

The rib 14 has tapered side walls so as to ensure desirable coverage of the upper common electrode 12 covering such a rib 14 having a certain level of height as described above.

Next, as shown in Figs. 5A, 5B and 5C, the organic layers 11R, 11G and 11B corresponded to each emission color are successively formed on the lower electrode 10 for each pixel "a". More specifically, a metal mask 20 having openings arranged in a pattern corresponded to each color of the pixels is placed on the rib 14 as a spacer, and the individual organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B are successively evaporated on the lower electrode 10. The individual organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B are formed so as to fully cover the exposed portion of the lower electrode 10, and are practically composed of, although not shown in the figure, an organic hole transport layer, an organic light emitting layer and an optional organic electron transport layer stacked, as occasion arises, in this order from the lower electrode 10 side.

A specific example of formation processes of the individual organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B will be detailed hereinafter.

First as shown in Fig. 5A, the metal mask 20 is placed so that the openings thereof are aligned to the pixels "a" responsible for green light emission, and organic materials are evaporated assisted by resistance heating. That is, a hole injection layer of 25 nm thick is formed by evaporating m-MTDATA [4,4',4''-tris(3-methylphenylphenylamino) triphenylamine], a hole transport layer of 30 nm thick is formed by evaporating

α -NPD [4,4-bis(N-1-naphthyl-N-phenylamino)biphenyl], and a light emitting layer of 50 nm thick also serves as an electron transport layer is formed by evaporating Alq3 [tris(8-quinolinolato)aluminium (III)]. These three
5 layers are evaporated in a continuous manner within a single chamber of an evaporation apparatus.

Next as shown in Fig. 5B, the metal mask 20 is placed so that the openings thereof are aligned to the pixels "a" responsible for blue light emission, and organic

10 materials are evaporated assisted by resistance heating. That is, a hole injection layer of 18 nm thick is formed by evaporating m-MTDATA, a hole transport layer of 30 nm thick is formed by evaporating for example α -NPD, a light emitting layer of 14 nm thick also serves as a hole
15 blocking layer is formed by evaporating Bathocuproine (2,9-dimethyl-4,7-diphenyl-1,10-phenanthroline), and a light emitting layer of for example 30 nm thick is formed by evaporating Alq3. These four layers are evaporated in a continuous manner within a single chamber of an
20 evaporation apparatus.

Further as shown in Fig. 5C, the metal mask 20 is placed so that the openings thereof are aligned to the pixels "a" responsible for red light emission, and organic materials are evaporated assisted by resistance heating.

25 That is, a hole injection layer of 55 nm thick is formed by evaporating m-MTDATA, a hole transport layer of 30 nm thick is formed by evaporating for example α -NPD, a light emitting layer is formed by evaporating BSB-BCN [2,5-bis {4-(N-methoxyphenyl-N-phenylamino)styryl}
30 benzene-1,4-dicarbonitrile], and an electron transport layer of 30 nm thick is formed by evaporating Alq3.

These four layers are evaporated in a continuous manner within a single chamber of an evaporation apparatus.

After the organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B are thus formed, an upper common electrode 12 is commonly formed for all pixels so as to cover the entire surface of the display area as shown in Fig. 6. The upper common electrode 12 is formed so as to cover the rib 14 having the tapered side walls and so as to be connected to the conductive material layer 14b composing the upper portion of the rib 14, but isolated from the lower electrode 10 by the organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B and the insulating film 13.

The upper common electrode 12 is used as an anode electrode or a cathode electrode, and is made of a transparent material when the display apparatus is designed to be of the top emission type, whereas made of a highly reflective material when the display apparatus is designed to be of the transmission type. The upper common electrode 12 is preferably formed by a method such as evaporation or chemical vapor deposition, in which energy of particles to be deposited is small enough to avoid adverse influences on the underlying layer. It is also preferable to form the upper common electrode 12 successively from the processes for forming the organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B in the same chamber of the deposition apparatus, so as to avoid deterioration of the organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B due to the atmospheric moisture.

In such constitution of the display apparatus of top emission type having the lower electrode 10 serves as an anode electrode, the upper common electrode 12 is used

as a cathode electrode. It is now preferable to form the upper common electrode 12 with a transparent material having a small work function, so as to allow efficient injection of electrons into the organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B, and more preferably with a metal film which can be formed by a film forming method such as vapor deposition in which energy of particles to be deposited is relatively small. The upper common electrode 12 is now formed with a metal film such as Mg-Ag alloy high in light transmissivity and preferably having that of 30% or above, which can be attained by forming the Mg-Ag alloy in a thickness of 14 nm.

When the lower electrode 10 is used as a cathode electrode, the upper common electrode 12 serves as an anode electrode. The upper common electrode 12 in such a case is preferably made of a transparent material having a large work function, and preferably made of a metal film which can be formed by evaporation method.

On the other hand, when the display apparatus is of transmission type and the upper common electrode 12 is used as a cathode electrode, the upper common electrode 12 is made of a conductive material having a small work function and a high light reflectivity. When the display apparatus is of transmission type and the upper common electrode 12 is used as an anode electrode, the upper common electrode 12 is made of a conductive material having a large work function and a high light reflectivity.

After that as shown in Fig. 7, a conductive or insulating protective film 16 is formed on the transparent upper common electrode 12 made of a thin

metal film. The protective film 16 is now formed by a method such as evaporation or chemical vapor deposition, in which energy of particles to be deposited is small enough to avoid adverse influences on the underlying layer. It is also preferable to form the protective film 16 successively from the processes for forming the upper common electrode 12 in the same chamber of the deposition apparatus without exposing the upper common electrode 12 to the atmosphere. Thus the protective layer 16 is formed while preventing the organic layers 11R, 12G and 11B from being degraded due to the atmospheric oxygen or moisture.

The protective film 16 is further intended for preventing the moisture from reaching the organic layers 11R, 11G and 11B, so that the film 16 needs be made of a material low in moisture permeability and moisture absorption, and made to have a sufficient thickness. When the display apparatus is of the top emission type, the protective film 16 needs be made of a material allowing light emitted from the organic layers 11R, 11G and 11B to pass through, and preferably has a light transmissivity of 80% or above.

In particular in this case, the protective film 16 is formed using an insulating material. That is, the insulating protective film 16 is directly formed on the upper common electrode 12 simply made a single thin metal film.

Preferable material for composing such a protective film 16 include inorganic amorphous insulating materials such as amorphous silicon (α -Si), amorphous silicon carbide (α -SiC), amorphous silicon nitride (α -Si_{1-x}N_x)

and amorphous carbon (α -C). Such inorganic amorphous insulating materials can compose an excellent protective film 16 due to their low moisture permeability by virtue of their grain-free texture.

5 For a case that amorphous silicon nitride is intended as a material for the protective film 16, the film is formed by the CVD method in a thickness of 2 to 3 μ m. It is now preferable to set the film forming temperature at the normal temperature so as to avoid
10 lowering in the luminous intensity due to deterioration of the organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B, and it is also preferable to form the protective film 16 under a condition allowing the film stress to be minimized so as to avoid peel-off of the protective film 16.

15 For a case that the protective film 16 is made with a conductive material, a transparent conductive material such as ITO or IXO can properly be used.

 After the protective film 16 is thus formed, a glass substrate 18 is optionally fixed thereon using an
20 ultraviolet curing resin layer 17 as shown in Fig. 1, thereby to finish the display apparatus.

 In the thus fabricated organic EL display, the upper common electrode 12 is connected with the rib 14 provided over the entire area of the display plane and
25 serving as an auxiliary wiring therefor, so that the voltage gradient of the upper common electrode 12 formed so as to blanket the display plane can be suppressed, thereby to prevent the voltage drop. This successfully ensures sufficient luminous intensity of the organic EL
30 device 9 provided for each pixel "a" in the display plane.

 In particular in the display apparatus of the top

emission type, the sheet resistance of the upper common electrode 12 will rise if it is made of a thin metal film allowing the light emitted from the organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B to pass through. The conductive material layer 14b of the rib 14 can, however, serve as an auxiliary wiring for the upper common electrode 12 and can suppress the voltage gradient of such upper common electrode 12 within the display plane, so that the voltage drop at around the center of the display plane can be suppressed.

Such constitution allows sufficient luminous intensity of the organic EL device 9 provided for the individual pixels "a" within the display plane, even if the protective film 16 made of an insulating material is directly formed on the upper common electrode 12 made of a thin metal film. Such upper common electrode 12 made of a thin metal film and the protective film 16 made of an insulating material can be formed by a method such as evaporation or chemical vapor deposition, in which energy of film-forming particles to be deposited is small enough to avoid adverse influences on the underlying layer, so that damages to the organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B can be avoided. This will prevent leak current from being generated, and will thus prevent the production of non-emissive pixels called "dead pixels" from being produced.

Moreover, since the rib 14 is used not only as the auxiliary wiring but also as the spacer for the mask 20 used for patterning the organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B, there is no need to separately provide the spacer and the auxiliary wiring between every adjacent pixels "a". This allows space saving between every adjacent pixels "a" and reserve of the pixel area. This successfully results in

improving the display property of the active-matrix organic EL display apparatus of the top emission type.

Connecting the auxiliary wiring (rib 14) to the high-resistivity upper common electrode 12 also allows power saving of the display apparatus, and ensures desirable display property. This is also beneficial in that retaining desirable display property since heat generation from the upper common electrode 12 can be suppressed and thus the organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B can be prevented from being degraded.

The rib 14 has a double-layered structure composed of the insulating material layer 14a and the conductive material layer 14b stacked thereon, and the height of the rib 14 sufficient for functioning as a spacer is ensured by the insulating material layer 14a. Thus the rib 14 required to have a certain height can readily be formed without producing etching residual of the conductive material layer 14b.

While in the above embodiment the rib 14 was explained as such that a double-layered structure in which the conductive material layer 14b is stacked on the insulating material layer 14a, the rib 14 may also be composed of another double-layered structure in which the insulating material layer 14a is stacked on the conductive material layer 14b as shown in Fig. 8. While being not shown, the surface of the insulating material layer may be covered with a conductive material layer, or the rib 14 may be composed only of a conductive material layer. Composing the rib 14 only of the conductive material layer allows the rib 14 and the upper common electrode 12 connected thereto to be lowered in the

resistivity.

It is preferable that the rib 14 of any constitution described above preferably has the tapered sidewalls. Of course in any constitution of the rib 14, the conductive material layer is connected to the upper common electrode 12 of the organic EL device, so as to be composed as an auxiliary wiring of the upper common electrode 12. And since the rib 14 is formed so as to have a top surface of which higher in the level than the organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B, that the rib 14 can be used as a spacer for the metal mask 20 for defining the pattern during evaporation of such organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B.

Fig. 9 is a schematic plan view showing a display area of an organic EL display apparatus according to another embodiment of the present invention.

The organic EL display apparatus shown in Fig. 9 differs from the apparatus shown in Figs. 1 and 2 in that the rib 14' has a double-layered structure in which an insulating material layer 14a' having an island pattern and a conductive material layer 14b used as an auxiliary wiring, while the remaining portions are the same.

That is, between every adjacent pixels "a" of the organic EL display apparatus, the conductive material layer 14b is provided in a lattice form, and on every crossing of the lattice an insulating material layer 14a' patterned in an island form is provided.

The height of the rib 14' which is expected to serve as a spacer is ensured by the insulating material layer 14a', wherein the sidewalls of the insulating material layer 14a' being formed in a tapered form so as

to allow a desirable coverage of the upper common electrode 12 covering such insulating material layer 14a'.

Also in the organic EL display apparatus having the thus-constituted rib 14', the voltage drop of the upper common electrode 12 within the display area can be suppressed since the upper common electrode 12 made of a high-resistivity transparent conductive material is connected to the conductive material layer 14b as an auxiliary wiring provided over the entire display plane.

Thus a sufficient luminous intensity of the organic EL devices 9 of the individual pixels "a" within the display plane is ensured. The stacked portion of the insulating material layer 14a' and the conductive material layer 14b of the rib 14' can serve as a spacer for the mask for patterning the organic layers 11R, 11G, 11B, so that there is no need to separately provide the spacer and the auxiliary wiring between every adjacent pixels. This allows space saving between every adjacent pixels and reserve of the pixel area. Thus similarly to the organic EL display apparatus as described in the previous embodiment, the active-matrix organic EL display apparatus of the top emission type can be improved in the display property.

Since the height of the portion of the rib 14' intended for use as a spacer is ensured by the insulating material layer 14a', fabrication of such spacer portion in need of having a certain height can easily be formed. In addition, since the insulating material layer 14a' is patterned into an island form, that the area occupied by the spacer portion in need of having a certain height (and therefore in need of having a certain degree of the

bottom area) can be reduced. This allows the conductive material layer 14b to be formed with a narrower pattern width between every adjacent pixels "a", which can expand the pixel area and improve the display property.

5 While the above description was made on the rib 14' composed of the conductive material layer 14b and the island-patterned insulating material layer 14a' formed thereon, another possible case relates to the rib 14' composed of the island-formed insulating material layer
10 and the conductive material layer overlaps at a part thereof.

 Although the invention has been described in its preferred form with a certain degree of particularity, obviously many changes and variations are possible
15 therein. It is therefore to be understood that the present invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described herein without departing from the scope and the spirit thereof.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A display apparatus having a plurality of pixels,
comprising:

a first electrode formed on a substrate;

5 a light emitting layer formed on said first
electrode; and

a second electrode formed on said light emitting
layer, wherein:

said plurality of pixels are partitioned by a rib
10 larger in thickness than said light emitting layer and
having at least a conductive material; and

said conductive material is electrically connected
to said second electrode.

15 2. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 1,
wherein said rib additionally has an insulating material
layer.

3. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 1,
20 wherein said rib has a mesa-formed section such that the
width of which becomes wider toward said substrate.

4. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 2,
wherein said rib has a mesa-formed section such that the
25 width of which becomes wider toward said substrate.

5. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 1,
further comprising:

a protective film made of an insulating material or
30 a conductive material and formed on said second
electrode; and

a second substrate stacked on said protective film.

6. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 5,
further comprising a photo-curing resin layer provided
5 between said protective film and said second substrate.

7. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 1,
wherein an insulating film is formed under said rib.

10 8. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 1,
wherein said rib is formed in an island form.

9. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 2,
wherein said rib is formed in an island form.

15 10. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 1,
wherein said second electrode is integrally formed over
said plurality of pixels.

20 11. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 1,
wherein said second electrode and the conductive material
are individually made of different materials.

25 12. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 1,
wherein said first electrode is higher in reflectivity of
light than said second electrode.

13. A display apparatus having a plurality of pixels,
comprising:
30 a field effective transistor formed on a substrate
and having a first electrode, a second electrode and a

third electrode;

an interlayer insulating film formed on said field effective transistor;

5 a lower electrode connected to said first electrode through an opening formed as penetrating said interlayer insulating film;

an organic layer formed on said lower electrode and having a light emitting layer; and

10 an upper electrode formed on the organic layer, wherein:

said plurality of pixels are partitioned by a rib larger in thickness than said organic layer and having at least a conductive material; and

15 said conductive material is electrically connected to said upper electrode.

14. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said rib additionally has an insulating material layer.

20 15. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said rib has a mesa-formed section such that the width of which becomes wider toward said substrate.

25 16. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 14, wherein said rib has a mesa-formed section such that the width of which becomes wider toward said substrate.

30 17. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, further comprising:

a protective film made of an insulating material or

a conductive material and formed on said second electrode; and

a transparent substrate stacked on said protective film.

5

18. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 17, further comprising a photo-curing resin layer provided between said protective film and said transparent substrate.

10

19. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein an insulating film is formed under said rib.

15

20. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said rib is formed in an island form.

21. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 14, wherein said rib is formed in an island form.

20

22. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said upper electrode is integrally formed over said plurality of pixels.

25

23. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said upper electrode and said conductive material are individually made of different materials.

30

24. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said lower electrode is higher in reflectivity of light than said upper electrode.

25. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said organic layer has an electron transport layer for transporting electrons and a hole transport layer for transporting holes.

5

26. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said field effective transistor is a field effective transistor of bottom-gate type.

10 27. The display apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said rib is roughly positioned above the opening.

28. A method for fabricating a display apparatus having a plurality of pixels, comprising:

15 a step for forming on a substrate a first electrode;

a step for forming between adjacent ones of said plurality of pixels a rib having a conductive material;

20 a step for placing a mask on said rib, and forming on said first electrode a light emitting layer smaller in thickness than said rib; and

a step for forming a second electrode on said light emitting layer and on said rib.

25 29. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as claimed in Claim 28, wherein said rib is made of an insulating material and a conductive material.

30 30. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as claimed in Claim 28, wherein said rib is formed so as to have a mesa-formed section such that the width of which

becomes wider toward said substrate.

31. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
claimed in Claim 29, wherein said rib is formed so as to
5 have a mesa-formed section such that the width of which
becomes wider toward said substrate.

32. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
claimed in Claim 28, further comprising:

10 a step for forming on said second electrode a
protective film made of an insulating material or a
conductive material; and

a step for adhering on said protective film a
second substrate using a photo-curing resin.

15

33. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
claimed in Claim 28, further comprising a step for
forming an insulating film under said rib.

20 34. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
claimed in Claim 28, wherein said rib is formed in an
island form in the step for forming said rib.

35. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
25 claimed in Claim 28, wherein said second electrode and
said conductive material layer are individually made of
different materials.

36. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
30 claimed in Claim 28, wherein said first electrode is
higher in reflectivity of light than said second

electrode.

37. A method for fabricating a display apparatus having a plurality of pixels, comprising:

5 a step for forming on a substrate a field effective transistor having a first electrode, a second electrode and a third electrode;

a step for forming on said field effective transistor an interlayer insulating film;

10 a step for forming an opening to said interlayer insulating film;

a step for forming on said interlayer insulating film a lower electrode connected through said opening to said first electrode;

15 a step for forming between adjacent ones of said plurality of pixels a rib having a conductive material;

a step for placing a mask on said rib, and forming on said lower electrode an organic layer having a light emitting layer smaller in thickness than said rib; and

20 a step for forming on said organic layer an upper electrode and a protective layer made of an insulating material or a conductive material while keeping said organic layer unexposed to the air.

25 38. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as claimed in Claim 37, wherein said rib is made of an insulating material and a conductive material.

39. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
30 claimed in Claim 37, wherein said rib is formed so as to have a mesa-formed section such that the width of which

becomes wider toward said substrate.

40. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
claimed in Claim 38, wherein said rib is formed so as to
5 have a mesa-formed section such that the width of which
becomes wider toward said substrate.

41. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
claimed in Claim 37, further comprising a step for
10 adhering on said protective film a second substrate using
a photo-curing resin.

42. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
claimed in Claim 37, further comprising a step for
15 forming an insulating film under said rib.

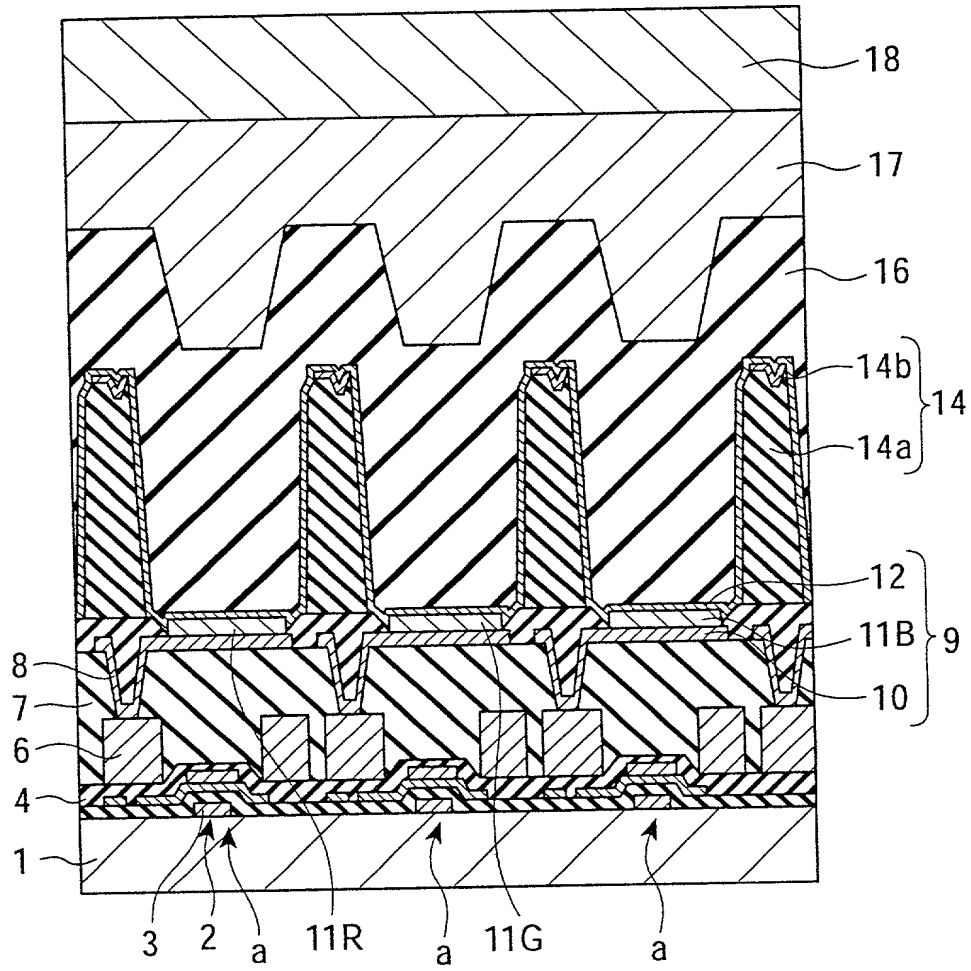
43. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
claimed in Claim 37, wherein said rib is formed in an
island form in the step for forming said rib.

44. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
claimed in Claim 37, wherein said upper electrode and
said conductive material layer are individually made of
different materials.

45. The method for fabricating a display apparatus as
claimed in Claim 37, wherein said lower electrode is
higher in reflectivity of light than said upper electrode.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An active-matrix-type display apparatus ensuring sufficient luminous intensity of display devices within a display plane and allowing improved display properties is provided. Such display apparatus having of a plurality of pixels comprises a lower electrode formed on a substrate; organic layers formed on the lower electrode; and an upper common electrode formed on the organic layers; in which a plurality of the pixels are partitioned by a rib larger in the thickness than the organic layers and having at least a conductive material layer; and the conductive material layer is electrically connected to the upper common electrode.



a ~~11B~~ 11G a ~~11R~~ 11B

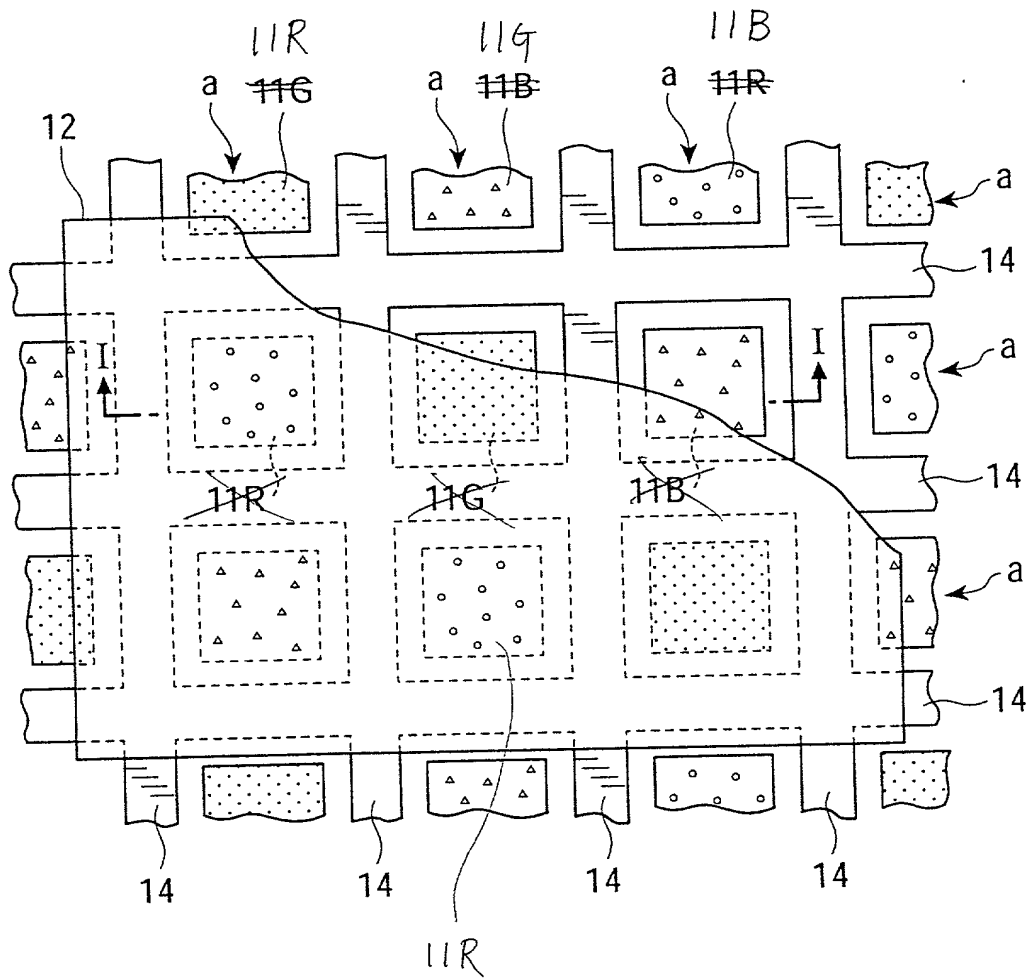


FIG. 3A

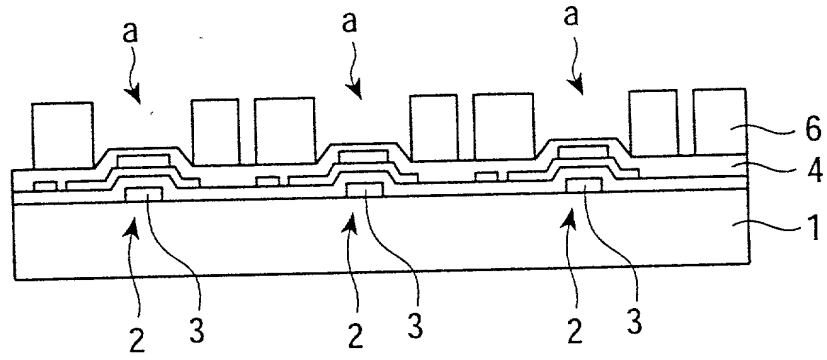


FIG. 3B

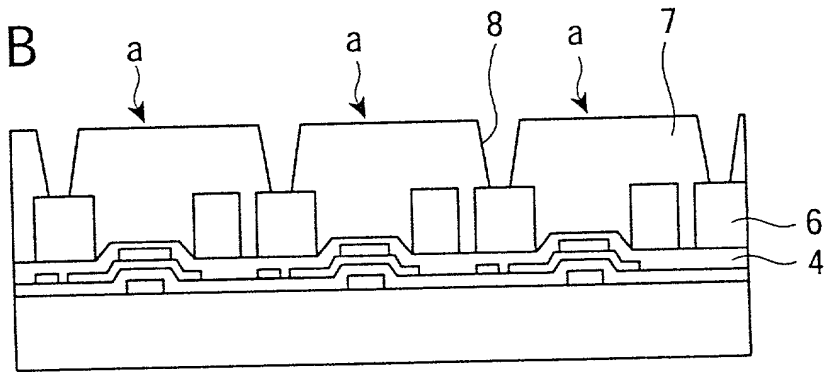


FIG. 3C

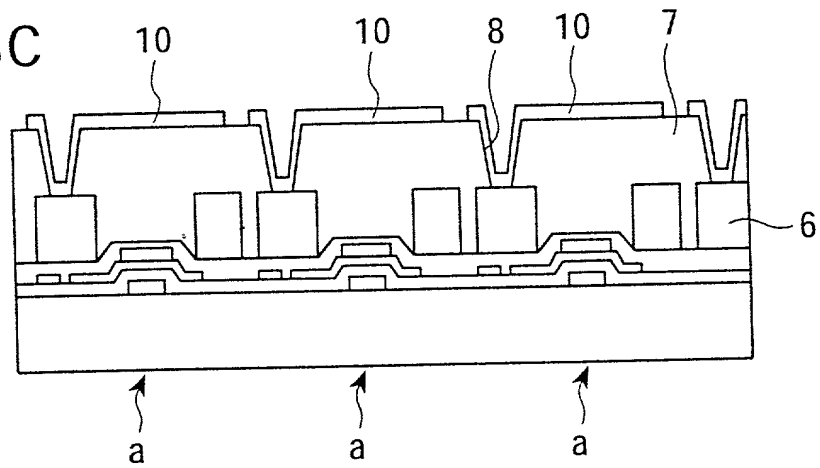


FIG. 4

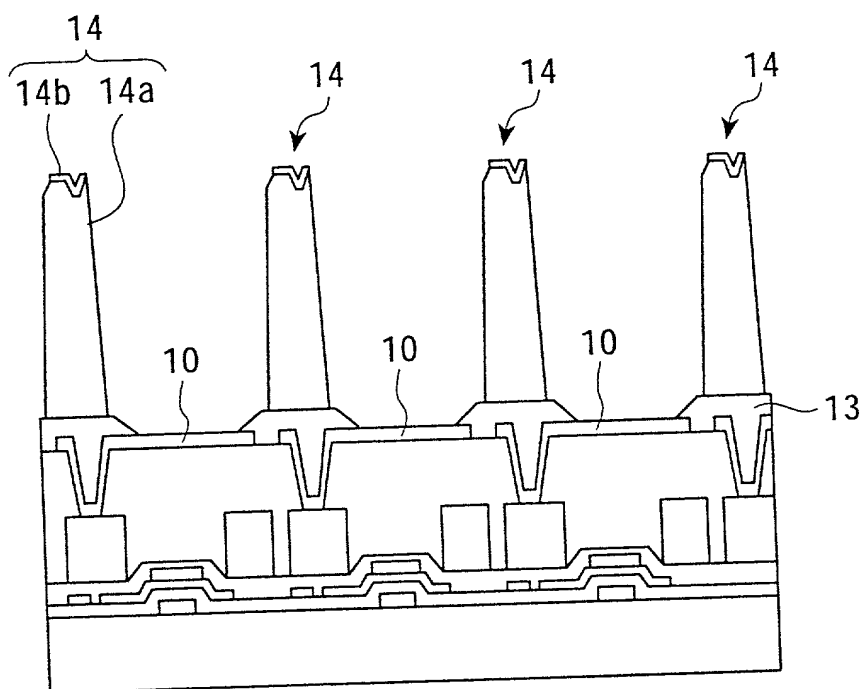


FIG. 5A

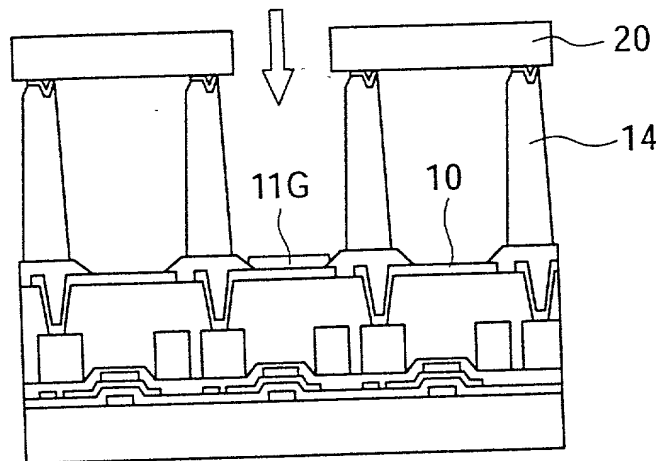


FIG. 5B

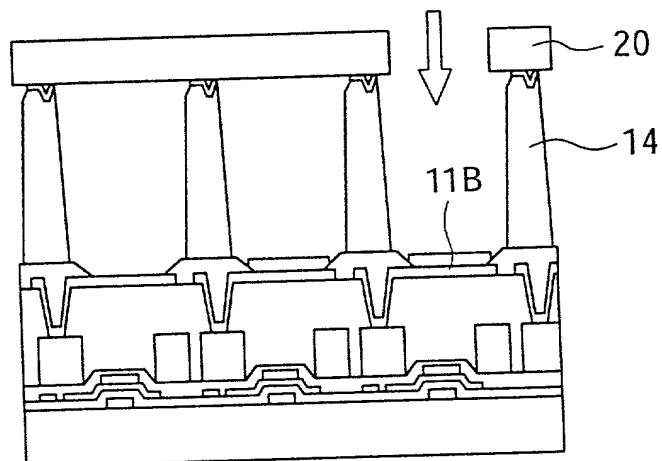


FIG. 5C

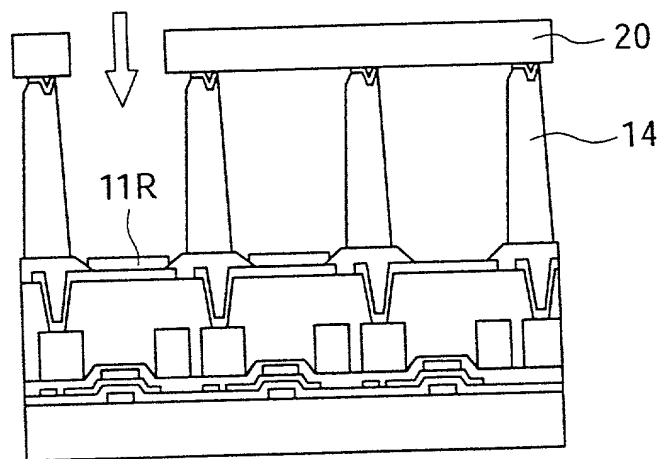


FIG. 6

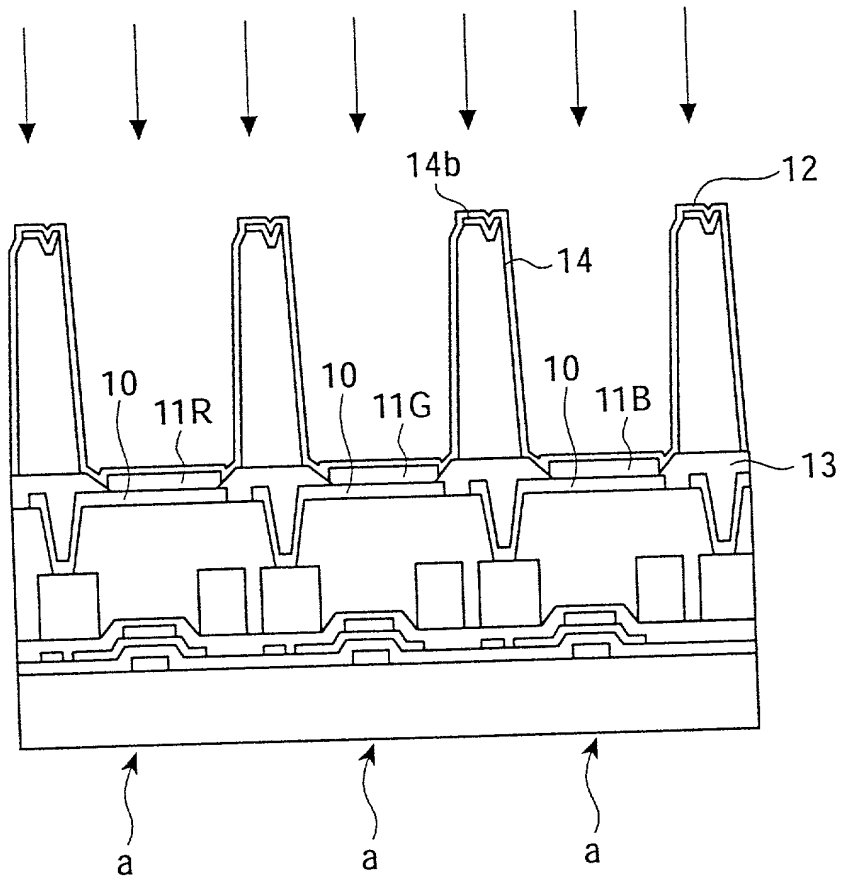


FIG. 7

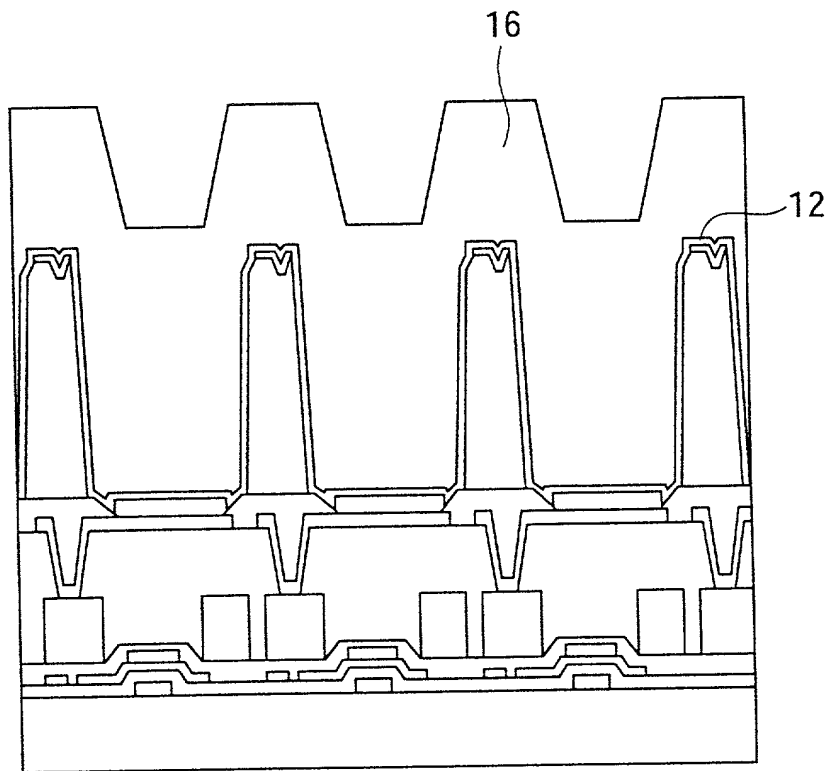
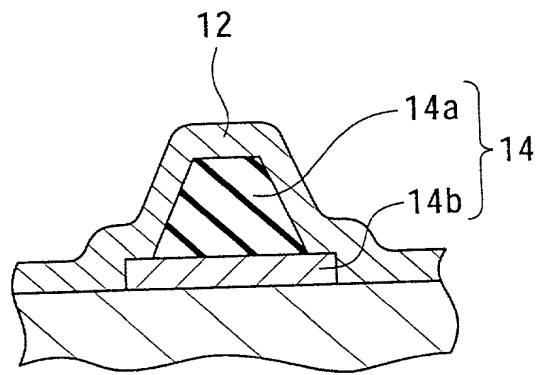


FIG. 8



DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION

特許出願宣言書及び委任状

Japanese Language Declaration

日本語宣言書

下記の氏名の発明者として、私は以下の通り宣言します。

私の住所、私書箱、国籍は下記の私の氏名の後に記載された通りです。

下記の名称の発明に関して請求範囲に記載され、特許出願している発明内容について、私が最初かつ唯一の発明者（下記の氏名が一つの場合）もしくは最初かつ共同発明者であると（下記の名称が複数の場合）信じています。

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

“DISPLAY APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR FABRICATING THE SAME”

the specification of which is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

☐ was filed on _____ as United States Application Number or PCT International Application Number _____ and was amended on _____ (if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

上記発明の明細書（下記の欄でx印がついていない場合は、本書に添付）は、

☐ __月__日に提出され、米国出願番号または特許協定条約国際出願番号を_____とし、
（該当する場合）_____に訂正されました。

私は、特許請求範囲を含む上記訂正後の明細書を検討し、内容を理解していることをここに表明します。

私は、連邦規則法典第37編第1条56項に定義されたとおり、特許資格の有無について重要な情報を開示する義務があることを認めます。

私は、米国法典第35編119条(a)-(d)項又は365条(b)項に基づき下記の、米国以外の国の少なくとも一カ国を指定している特許協力条約365(a)項に基づき国際出願、又は外国での特許出願もしくは発明者証の出願についての外国優先権をここに主張するとともに、優先権を主張している、本出願の前に出願された特許または発明者証の外国出願を以下に、枠内をマークすることで、示しています。

Prior Foreign Application(s)

外国での先行出願

P11-306245 Japan October 28, 1999

(Number) (番号)	(Country) (国名)	(Day Month Year Filed) (出願年月日)

(Number) (番号)	(Country) (国名)	(Day Month Year Filed) (出願年月日)

I hereby claim foreign priority under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or Inventor's certificate or 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or Inventor's certificate or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Priority Not Claimed

優先権主張なし

P2000-266441 Japan September 4, 2000

(Number)	(Country)	(Day Month Year Filed)

(Number)	(Country)	(Day Month Year Filed)

私は、第35編米国法典119条(e)項に基づいて下記の米国特許出願規定に記載された権利をここに主張いたします。

(Application No.) (出願番号)	(Filing Date) (出願日)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

(Application No.) (出願番号)	(Filing Date) (出願日)

私は、下記の米国法典第35編120条に基づいて下記の米国特許出願に記載された権利、又は米国を指定している特許協力条約365条(c)に基づき権利をここに主張します。また、本出願の各請求範囲の内容が米国法典第35編112条第1項又は特許協力条約で規定された方法で先行する米国特許出願に開示されていない限り、その先行米国出願書提出日以降で本出願書の日本国内または特許協力条約国際提出日までの期間中に入手された、連邦規則法典第37編1条56項で定義された特許資格の有無に関する重要な情報について開示義務があることを認識しています。

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s) or 365(c) of an PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application.

(Application No.)
(出願番号)

(Filing Date)
(出願日)

(Status: patented, pending, abandoned)
(現況: 特許許可済、保属中、放棄済)

Application No.)
(出願番号)

(Filing Date)
(出願日)

(Status: patented, pending, abandoned)
(現況: 特許許可済、保属中、放棄済)

私は、私自身の知識に基づいて本宣言書中で私が行なう表明が真実であり、かつ私の入手した情報と私の信じることに基づく表明が全て真実であると信じていること、さらに故意になされた虚偽の表明及びそれと同等の行為は米国法典第18編第1001条に基づき、罰金または拘禁、もしくはその両方により処罰されること、そしてそのような故意による虚偽の声明を行なえば、出願した、又は既に許可された特許の有効性が失われることを認識し、よってここに上記のごとく宣誓を致します。

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

委任状: 私は下記の発明者として、本出願に関する一切の手続きを米特許商標局に対して遂行する弁理士または代理人として、下記の者を指名いたします。(弁理士、または代理人の氏名及び登録番号を明記のこと)

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. (list name and registration number)

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312/876-2578

Page 3

Japanese Language Declaration

(日本語宣言書)

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Japanese Language Declaration

(日本語宣言書)

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